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INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
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RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1182  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3220  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2606  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE  
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RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BISHKEK 000088

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/30/2019

TAGS: PGOV PREL MARR KG

SUBJECT: KYRGYZ AMBASSADOR SYDYKOVA URGES IMMEDIATE ACTION  
TO SAVE MANAS

REF: A. STATE 8297  
1B. STATE 7736  
1C. BISHKEK 67  
1D. BISHKEK 62  
1E. BISHKEK 47

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Classified By: Ambassador Tatiana C. Gfoeller, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: Kyrgyz Ambassador to the United States Sydykova told the Ambassador that President Bakiyev had decided to close Manas Air Base in December 2008 in exchange for a Russian financial package. However, complications had arisen with the Russians which meant that there was still a chance this deal would not be consummated during Bakiyev's February 3 trip to Moscow. Sydykova said that the Secretary "must" call President Bakiyev before he travels to Moscow February 3. She claimed that Russia "held the key" and urged immediate high-level contact with the Russian administration to persuade the Russians to hold off pressuring Bakiyev to close the Base. If all else fails and Bakiyev notifies the USG of his intention to close the Base in 6 months, she urged that "you Americans shouldn't give up. Just send out a high-level negotiation team and settle on a higher price." However, she implied that at that point the price would be very much higher; coming to some sort of understanding before February 3 would be far more economical for the USG. End Summary.

Bakiyev Rejecting "Multi-Vector" Policy

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12. (C) Kyrgyz Ambassador to the United States Zamira Sydykova told the Ambassador January 30 that President Bakiyev had decided to issue orders to close Manas Air Base back in December 2008. Sydykova recounted her stormy mid-December meeting with Bakiyev: Bakiyev said that he was furious at and did not trust the Americans, because they had "reneged on their promises to provide \$150 million for the Base." (As an aside, Sydykova added that even she thought what the USG pays for the Base is paltry compared to what we spend on the war

in Afghanistan overall.) Sydykova added that Bakiyev had railed about the lack of results in the Ivanov shooting investigation, at one point partly blaming Sydykova for not working hard enough on the issue: "You would be working harder if he had been an ethnic Kyrgyz," he accused her. Bakiyev concluded that he'd "had it" with the U.S. and with multi-vector diplomacy, which he perceived as giving him no advantages in any sphere. According to Sydykova, Bakiyev told her that she would see the changes in policy in mid-January.

¶3. (C) Sydykova claimed that she "begged" Bakiyev to meet with CENTCOM Commander Gen. Petraeus during the latter's January 17-20 visit to Kyrgyzstan. Bakiyev refused point blank, Sydykova said, complaining he had met with many Americans over the past years who make promises, "but not a single one has delivered." "I'm done listening to the Americans' empty sweet-talk," she claimed he had concluded.

¶4. (C) Sydykova said that earlier this week, Bakiyev had intimated to her that she would be relieved of her duties in Washington, because she would not be able to present the "new policy" (i.e. post-Base closure) effectively.

Doubts about Russian Assistance?

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¶5. (C) However, Sydykova indicated she thought there was still a possibility to change Bakiyev's mind regarding the Base. She said that Russia played the key role, putting pressure on Bakiyev to close the Base. Sydykova claimed that Bakiyev's planned trip to Moscow had been delayed repeatedly since the December decision as the two sides haggled over the

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terms of a \$2.5 billion economic package. Sydykova said Bakiyev had hesitated on closing the Base because of growing doubts that Russia would come through with the money. Even at this point, Sydykova said, the two sides had not agreed on the ownership shares of a joint venture to construct the \$1.7 billion Kambarata 1 hydroelectric facility. Bakiyev wanted a 51% stake for the Kyrgyz "to show the opposition he was not selling off Kyrgyzstan's resources," while the Russians were insisting on 50-50. Sydykova added that Bakiyev was also angered by President Medvedev's statement in Tashkent that construction of new hydropower plants must take into account the interests of all affected parties.

"Huge Effort" Needed to Save Manas

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¶6. (C) Sydykova said that it would take a "huge effort" to save the Base, and only high-level intervention could get Bakiyev to change his mind. She urged that the Secretary call Bakiyev before his February 3 trip to Moscow. Without suggesting names, Sydykova also urged high-level contact with the Russian administration to persuade the Russians to hold off pressuring Bakiyev to close the Base.

¶7. (C) The Ambassador told Sydykova that she was seeking meetings with Bakiyev, Chief of Staff Usenov, and the new Foreign Minister to underscore that the new Administration values Kyrgyzstan's decision to host the Base, inform them that Gen. Petraeus is sending a team to present concrete proposals, and urge them not to take any precipitous decisions (Ref A). The Ambassador said that she also had information to convey on the status of the Ivanov shooting investigation (Ref B). Sydykova said she could not help to secure a meeting with Bakiyev because she "couldn't contact him," nor could she help with a Usenov meeting as she just had a "huge fight" with him. Sydykova urged the Ambassador to convey her message to Security Council Secretary Madumarov. Sydykova said that Madumarov was a "close friend" and she would push him to take the meeting. (Note: Madumarov had rebuffed our earlier request for a meeting. End Note.)

¶8. (C) When the Ambassador repeated that closing the Base was no way to begin relations with a new Administration, Sydykova said she had made the same argument to Bakiyev in December, but that it had carried no weight with him. For Bakiyev, it all came down to money. The Ambassador added that if Bakiyev does take the decision to close the Base, there would be serious consequences for the bilateral relationship.

Sydykova said she understood this, and she acknowledged that her access to U.S. officials in Washington would be diminished, but she would be able to maintain her "good contacts" in American civil society. She contrasted this to the situation in Bishkek, where "everyone" would be afraid to talk to the U.S. Embassy.

¶9. (C) Sydykova, grasping for something positive, pointed out that even though Bakiyev had earlier indicated that she would be fired, she still had her job. She also said that Bakiyev had re-affirmed a commitment to multi-vector foreign policy during his January 27 address to the nation. (Comment: Sydykova may be mis-reading the speech. Bakiyev spoke of "reasonable balance" in carrying out national interests. He did not specifically refer to foreign policy. End Comment.) She also stated emphatically that even if Bakiyev does serve notice on the Base following his trip to Moscow, "you Americans shouldn't give up. Just send out a high-level negotiation team and settle on a higher price." However, she implied that at that point the price would be very much higher. Not letting things come to this pass and coming to some sort of understanding before February 3 would be much more economical for the USG.

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Comment

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¶10. (C) Ambassador Sydykova vacillated throughout the meeting, at one moment saying Bakiyev had made up his mind, while at the next saying there was still a chance to change it. She apparently was not acting under any instructions, and it was obvious that she desperately wants to maintain her job in Washington and her influence here. We have to take her message guardedly, because Sydykova, as she herself admitted, is often kept out of the loop.

GFOELLER